

Translations of selected portions of Book I. of Chand Bardai's Epic.—By JOHN BEAMES, B. C. S., M. R. A. S., etc.

After the severe strictures passed on my translation of the 19th book by Mr. Growse, (which, however, he subsequently retracted) I think it necessary again to point out that in a poem constructed like this, absolute accuracy of translation is impossible. The lines generally consist of a string of crude forms of nouns without any inflectional terminations, or signs of case. In languages destitute of such grammatical formations, the order of words in a sentence often supplies the requisite clue to the meaning. This is not the case with Chand. His words, if taken in the order in which they stand, often yield no meaning at all. In some cases turn the words as we may, it is not easy to make out any clear sense. The verbs when they occur do certainly exhibit some signs of tense; thus we have the singular masculine of the preterite in *-yau*, the feminine in *-i*, the plural masculine in *-e*, the plural feminine in *-in*; but more frequently all tenses and persons are rudely expressed by the indefinite participle in *-i*, as *kari*, *dekhi*, which serves alike for past, present, and future time.

There are two other difficulties. Archaic words which neither occur in the modern languages, nor can be traced to any known Sanskrit root; and the insertion of arbitrary letters to eke out the rhythm, such as *ta*, *su*, *ha*, which have no meaning whatever.

When to all this is added the extreme difficulty of dividing the words, I think I am not asking too much from critics, if I request that they will confine themselves to politely stating that they think I am mistaken; instead of at once taxing me with ignorance of a language which I have studied for fourteen years, and whose difficulty I appreciate as much as any one can.

I have recently learnt from a missionary at Ajmir that even the professional bards of that place admit their inability to understand more than the general drift of Chand's poems.

The secret of this loose careless archaic patois will only be discovered, when our researches into the vast and ancient language of which it represents one phase have been established on a firm footing. To that end some few of us are devoting our spare time. The following efforts at a rendering are perhaps premature, but even so they may yield some fruit of assistance to the greater task, and may even prove in some sort a guide to those who in time to come may approach the subject with a better *apparatus criticus* than we possess at present. The Latin and Greek scholars of the fifteenth century knew very little compared with those of the present day; yet the world is not without some debt to Erasmus and Reuchlin, or even to

their learned predecessors. Put me and my contemporaries as low as you will in the scale of scholarship, yet it must be admitted that we are making a beginning, upon which the better furnished scholars of the future will perhaps be not ashamed to build.

1st Selection.—THE OPENING OF THE POEM. STANZAS 1—13.

First, Satak metre. Om!—

1. First reverently bowing, bowing, the poet adores the feet of the Gurus.

(Taking) refuge at the feet of the highest, the afforder of support,¹ the husband of the opulent Lachihi ;

(Who) stands the lord of vice and of virtue, consuming the wicked, the lord of heaven, blessing with success ;

(Who is as) sandalwood to the life of living beings moving on the earth, lord of all, bestower of blessings.

2. Vathúú metre.

First the very auspicious root is to be celebrated.²

Irrigated with the water of the truth of tradition,

Religion, (like) a fair tree with one trunk sprung up

With thrice six branches rejoicing the three worlds,

Leaves (of various) colours, leaves (like) mouths, there were³

Colour of flowers, and weight of fruit (it had)

Speech unfailing, princely,

Rejoicing with fragrance the sight and touch

Asan tree of hope to the parrot (-like) poet.

3. Kavit.

First having indeed proclaimed a blessing

Having honored⁴ the sacred writings, (whose) beginning (is) the Veda,

(Whose) three-fold branches, in (all) four directions

(Are) possessed of colour, and leaves (like) letters

Religion having sprouted (out through) the bark

Flowered fair in (all) four directions

Its fruit, (virtuous) deeds,⁵ springing out

Immortal, dwelling amidst mortals

(Firm as) counsel of kings, (or as) the earth, the wind shakes it not

Giving to life the flavour of nectar,

The Kali (yuga) affixes no stain to it

Containing truth, wisdom, and (perpetual) freshness.

4. Kavit.

Taking possession of the earth (like) a garden plot

Irrigating it with the fullness of the Veda, as with water

Placing in it good seed⁶

Upsprung the shoot of knowledge

Combining branches of three qualities
 With leaves of many names, red as earth
 It flowered with good deeds, and good thoughts
 Complete deliverance, union of substances
 The twice-born of pure mind have experienced the flavour of perfect
 wisdom

A banian tree of delight, spreading abroad virtues,
 The branches of (this) excellent tree in the three worlds
 Uneconquered, victorious, diffusing virtues.

5. Bhujanga prayāta metre.

First be the well adorned Bhujangi⁷ taken
 Whose name this one, is spoken in many ways
 Second, betaken the god, the lord of life
 Who placed the universe by powerful spells on Seshnág.
 In the four Vedas by the Brahmans the glory of Hari is spoken,
 Of whose virtue, this unvirtuous world is witness.
 Third, the Bháratí Vyása spake the Bhárat, ⁸
 Who bore witness to the more than human charioteer.
 Fourth Suka deva at the feet of Parikhít
 Who extolled all the kings of the race of Kuru
 Fifth * * *

Who placed a six-fold necklacc on the neck of King Nala.

Sixth Kalidasa, fair of speech, fair of wit
 Whose speech is that of a poet, a master-poet fair-speaking,
 Who made the pure fragrance of the mouth of Kali,
 Who firmly bound the dyke of three-fold enjoyment.

Seventh, Danda mali's charming poem
 The wave of whose wit is as the stream of Gangá.

Jayadeva eighth, poet, king of poets
 Who only made the song of Govinda;
 Take all these poets as thy spiritual guide, Poet Chand,
 Whose body is as a sacrifice inspired by Devi.
 The poets who have uttered praises and excellent speech,
 Of them Poet Chand has spoken highly.

6. Duha.

The speech in verse of Chand, excellent.
 Hearing him utter, his wife (says)
 Purifier of the body, O poet,
 Uttering excellent speech.

7. Kavít.

Saith the wife to her husband.
 Purifier of offspring, great poet,

Uttering spells and charms,
 Like an oblation offered to Devi,
 Hero of spells, very terrible,
 Giving pleasure to kings by thy poetry ;
 The childish sports, one by one,
 Of the gods having extolled in thy poems,
 Having uttered unchecked speech,
 From which to me (comes) wisdom,
 That word which is the visible form of Brahm,
 Why should not the best of poets speak it ?

8. Kavit, Chand's speech.

To his wife (saith) the bard
 Chand, muttering soft and low,
 That true word of Brahm,
 Purifier of (all) others itself pure,
 That word which has no form,
 Stroke, letter, or colour,
 Unshaken, unfathomable, boundless,
 Purifier of all things in the three worlds,
 That word of Brahma, let me expound
 The glory of the Gurus, pleasing to Saraswati,
 If in the arrangement of my phrases I should succeed,
 It will be pleasing to thee, O lotus-faced one !

9. Kavit, Chand's wife's speech.

Thou art the poet, the excellent bard,
 Gazing on the heavens with unclouded intellect,¹⁰
 Skilful in the arrangement of metres
 Having made the song of the Peacock-youth ;¹¹
 The wave of thy wit is like Ganga,
 Uttering speech immortal, soft
 Good men hearing it are rejoiced,
 (It) subdues like a spell of might.
 The incarnation King Prithiraj the lord,
 Who maintained the happiness of his kingdom,
 Hero, chief of heroes, and all his paladins,
 Of them speak a good word.¹²

10. Kavit, Chand's speech.

To her of the elephant-gait, Chand
 Singing a pleasant rhyme (said),
 Ravisher of the soul, tendril of enjoyment,
 Possessing the fragrance of the ocean of the gods,
 (Thou) of the glancing eye, in the flower of thy youth,

Beloved of my soul, giver of bliss,
 Wife, free from all evil qualities,¹³
 (Thou) who hast obtained the fruit of the worship of Gauri.
 As many poems as there have been from first to last
 Consider how endless a string (there is) of them,
 The description of this matter (is in) many books,
 Thus having taken in the best counsel.¹⁴

11. Paddhari metre.

First reverencing my first of gods
 Who uttered the imperishable word OM!
 Who made the Formed out of the Formless,
 The will of his mind blossomed and bore fruit,
 The sheen of the three qualities, inhabiting the three worlds,
 Shining on gods in heaven, men on earth, serpents (in hell).
 Then in the form of Brahma leaving the Brahma-egg,¹⁵
 The lord, the essence of truth said the four Vedas,
 The creator uttered them, unwritten,
 Without qualities, having neither form nor line,
 He who made the heaven, earth, and hell,
 Yama, Brahma, Indra, the Rishis, and guardians of the worlds,
 Winds, fire, clouds, ether,
 Rivers, ocean, earth, mountains, and their inhabitants,
 He created eighty-four lakhs of living beings
 I cannot come to an end of the description of them.
 He made a tendril of eighteen colours,
 Of various kinds, subject to all qualities,
 No one can resist his commands,
 Placing the order on his head (one) bears grief in the body.
 Day by day the sun-god when night turns to dawn¹⁶
 Rises; this comes to pass by force of the lord's command.
 The moon every night obedient to order
 Rises in the sky, being without division,¹⁷
 The guardians of the regions remain patiently pressed down by the
 earth,
 Their joints do not ache though they remain firmly pressed.
 He appoints to the wind its measure and the place of its going,
 It neither exceeds nor falls short, makes joy to the body.
 Indra's heaven, clouds, and sky (obey his) order,
 He makes the rain to rain joyfully.
 Firm and immoveable remains the earth (like) the glory of the lord,
 It cannot shake or move for an instant in distress.
 The wave rising touches the sky,

On the brink of the ocean there remains no trace of it ;
 Having obtained its limit, not one (wave) passes it,
 It advances only so far as the lord's command (allows).
 His order no one can refute,
 Neither in the past, nor in the future, nor in the present.
 The Veda describes Brahma as illimitable,
 Filling the water and land he remains in every material object.
 Then spake Vyasa eighteen Puranas.
 Arranging the incarnations in various order
 He describes with clear intellect every god,
 He searched out all of them, he did not confound their character.
 Then Valmiki, the incarnation of Ram,
 Related in a book of a hundred krores (of lines) essence of truth.

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The mighty bear, the story of the friendly monkey
 Again five poems five poets made,
 Placed a light in the breasts of ignorant men,
 In a few words wisdom is shown,
 I might make a boast, then you would laugh.

12. Duhâ. Hearing the poem of Poet Chand,
 Delighted in her mind, his wife (says),
 Thou art the poet, the charming poet,
 Laughing being prevented.

13. Kavit. Quoth the intelligent wife.

Thou who hast spells on thy tongue—ocean of spells
 Excelling in the description of witness
 Like the shining moon
 Thou bestower of heavenly blessings,
 Grant a gift to me, O poet !
 The eighteen Purânas
 Their names and quantity all ;
 Thou telling the tale joy (will be) to me,
 Past and future existences will be purified,
 The darkness of ignorance is destroyed by hearing this,
 The filth of (spiritual) blindness is removed from the heart.

Whereupon Chand in a long Kavit recites the names of the Puranas
 and number of lines contained in each.

It is not worth translating.

Notes to 1st Selection.

1. Or "supporting the earth," if धारण be meant for धरणौ, which is quite possible.
2. This line is extra-metral, and is probably meant as a note.
3. A conjectural rendering, which does not satisfy me. I can propose no better.
4. I read संपूजय. Another reading is संपजय, which seems to have arisen from an omission of the vowel by the copyist.
5. क्रम = कर्म.
6. This strange line I read as if for बीज सुभ लभ्य मध्य.
7. I do not know what the allusion is here.
8. These words are probably a corruption, उत्तपारथ सारथ being for उत्पार्थिव, more than earthly, from उत्त, over, and पृथिवी, earth, and सारथिन् charioteer. It is an allusion to Krishna's acting as charioteer to Arjuna in the great war.
9. I cannot understand this line.
10. Of the many senses of नाक, the one here given is the only one that will yield any meaning.
11. This seems to be an allusion to the Sanskrit poem called Kumâra Sambhava, or the "Birth of the Wargod" Kartikeya, whose emblem is the peacock. Chand may have written a paraphrase of that work, as he seems to have been well acquainted with Sanskrit literature.
12. गल्ह is still the common Panjâbî for "a word." Many of these Panjâbî words occur in Chand, which is natural, as he was a native of Lâhor.
13. Literally, wife without the quality (निगुन *i. e.*, unqualified by)—of गरु अगुन, heavy, bad qualities.
14. I do not pretend to understand what the poet means by these four lines, which I have translated as literally as I could.
15. I read ब्रह्माण्ड चारि (for चाडि), but there is another reading ब्रह्मा उवारि, which is not intelligible. उ and ड are often written for one another in the MSS.
16. रजनि भोर, literally 'dawn of night,' which would convey a different meaning to our minds.
17. कलाहोन, having no *Kalâs*, or the 16 digits into which the moon is divided.
18. This line is not intelligible, it contains some allusion to Sita's rape, but the meaning is not clear.

(To be continued.)